

L'UMILE PIANTA.

This number of "L'Umile Pianta" comes from the hands of a fresh printer, and will, it is hoped, be free from the drawbacks of the old.

Will, however, all students kindly remember that in order to insure punctual publication, matter must reach the Editor *early*. We shall endeavour to publish the magazine at the beginning and the end of each term, and not at all in the holidays.

The next number should therefore appear on June 1st.

All communications must then reach the Editor by MAY 12TH.

ANNOUNCEMENTS.

ILSLEY *née* CLARK.—On February 27th, at Homewood Hotel, Port Elizabeth, the wife of Harold S. Ilsley, of a daughter (Kathleen Maude).

MORTON *née* FAGAN.—At Ettrich Bank, Helensburgh, on February 19th, to Mr. and Mrs. James Morton, of the Eton Gardens, Hillhead, Glasgow, twin daughters.

STUDENTS' MEETINGS.

STUDENTS' COMMITTEE.

The following members having been elected, they have undertaken to represent each "year" of students. In the next number the Editor hopes to print a list of the "years" undertaken by each member.

EX-OFFICIO.

The Treasurer.—L. Gray, 5, Old Palace Lane, Richmond, Surrey.

The Editor.—(Undertakes 1896 and 1897).—R. A. Penne-
thorne, Holmfield, Wadhurst, Sussex.

ELECTED MEMBERS.

Miss W. Kitching, 18, Hastings Road, Ealing.

Miss Parish, P.N.E.U. Office, Victoria Street.

Miss Wix, 23, Hyde Park Gardens, London, W.

Miss Franklin, 50, Porchester Terrace, London, W.

Mrs. Hall, Colleendeen, Addiscombe Grove, Croydon.

Miss Faunce, 13, Chilworth Street, Bayswater.

Miss M. Conder, Maurice Hostel, Hoxton.

In the February number of "L'Umile Pianta," there was a short notice pointing out what has been felt by students for some time—namely, the need of a Central Committee to

deal with Association matters; to voice, and when possible, to carry through the desires or suggestions of students scattered all over the world. It was felt that such a Committee ought to meet in London, and consist of students living in town.

Some Students living out of London may not, perhaps, realise how badly this Committee is needed. Our Editor and Secretary both now living out of town, the Students' Meetings continue in a rather desultory manner. It is *very* amusing to go to them and to meet one's friends, but they might be made so much more useful. Very little helpful business is done at them; they are only meetings of units, and do not have the far-reaching influence over *all* students that they might have.

So at a meeting held on February 1st, it was suggested that a Students' Executive Committee would be helpful. It was impossible at such short notice to get at a sufficient number of Students to have a "General Election" of members, yet it was thought advisable, without further delay, to elect a Provisional Committee, to stand until the next Ambleside Conference. It will be seen by reference to the Rules of the "Students' Executive Committee," published in this number of "L'Umile Pianta," that such a body has been formed. As only a comparatively small number of students elected the members, they consider themselves only as a Provisional Committee, perhaps almost experimental. The members elected are:—Miss M. Conder, Miss Faunce, Miss M. Franklin, Mrs. Hall, Miss W. Kitching, Miss Parish, and Miss Wix. And we shall probably make mistakes, but things cannot go on in a more aimless manner than they do already, and we hope, by Easter, 1909, to have proved at any rate the usefulness of the "Students' Executive Committee."

The first meeting of the Committee was held on March 7th. All the members were present, and the Rules were

drawn up and the duties and responsibilities of the Committee were discussed.

Perhaps the most important thing we decided was, that we must, between the seven of us, get into touch with *all* the students. So (see Rule ii) we arranged each to get into communication with a certain number of "years" of students. By this means *every* student will have a share and an interest in the Monthly Meetings, and also in the Ambleside Conference, and we shall all gain immensely by being so much more closely linked together.

After this Committee Meeting there was a Students' Meeting, at which the following were present, besides the seven already mentioned:—Miss Benan, Miss Dismoor, Miss Evans, Miss Roffe, Miss V. R. Saunders, Miss E. Smith, Miss Smeeton, and Miss Thomasset.

STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION.

RULES OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

I. The Executive Committee of the Students' Association to consist of seven members, *resident in London*, Hon. Secretary and Editor, all to be elected by the Association. The Students' Executive Committee (S.E.C.) and officers to be elected every two years, retiring members to be eligible for re-election.

N.B.—The present Provisional Committee to stand till 1909.

(a) The Committee to have power to add to its numbers for special business, *e.g.*, Conference arrangements.

II. Each member of the S.E.C. to undertake to represent a certain number of "years" (Students), so that *all* Students shall be thus represented.

III. Reports of all Committee Meetings to be published in "L'Umile Pianta"

IV. A Minute Book to be kept by the Secretary or Deputy, and the minutes of the last Meeting to be read and confirmed.

V. The S.E.C. to meet not less than twice a year.

Any member of the Committee to have power through the Secretary, to cause a Special Meeting to be called.

VI. The S.E.C. to hold itself responsible for the biennial Students' Conference.

VII. At all meetings of the S.E.C., *three* to form a quorum, except when fundamental changes are suggested, in which case the whole Committee to be consulted.

LINCOLNSHIRE MEETING.

It was a great pleasure to be one of seventeen at a Drawing-room Meeting at Scopwick House, near Lincoln, last Monday, the 10th, when Miss Parish talked about the PNEU—its principles and workings, dwelling on the important principles so well known to us all:—"Education is an atmosphere, a discipline, a life," made practical in "Surroundings, habits, and ideas."

Miss Parish gave a life history of the Union, bringing in its important branches—viz., the House of Education and the Parents' Union School.

One mother gave as her reason for not joining the latter, that there were twenty books used for a child of six, who ought to be out nearly all day. Also that many subjects were not needed, as B—— liked her lessons so much, so didn't wish to stop after twenty, or even thirty minutes. Miss Parish was equal to the occasion, and told her that it would be good discipline to change the interesting lessons at the appointed time, and that the number of books opened many doors, so that while the child got a substantial bit of knowledge, he caught glimpses of the unlimited beyond, which would prevent him saying, as a girl of fifteen said the other day, "I know Science."

Some of the ladies bought books and catalogues, and one became a member, so that we hope, in spite of the small meetings, this work may spread rapidly and so benefit the nation.

E. E. F.

P.R.S. NOTES.

PICTURE TALKS.

I hope there is the same thrill of enthusiasm in the atmosphere of every P.R.S. schoolroom as I find in mine at Picture Talk on Friday afternoon, and especially on the first Friday of the term, for then much speculation has been rife as to which artists the Fates would decree for the term's work, and I must say Sandro Botticelli had a very hearty welcome this January.

As there are generally thirteen Friday afternoons in the term, and only six Perry Pictures, we revel in the remaining seven times, and find them only too short. In Giotto's term, we rambled about Florence and Assisi, and learnt to know them fairly well, so at the beginning of this term we had only to gather up the threads and see what changes we could see in that City of the Immortals since Dante's time.

We found the most interesting plan in studying any painter was to map out his life in periods, and then study the pictures he painted in them. As Sandro was apprenticed in early life to a jeweller, he shows his early training in beautiful elaborate jewellery and ornamentation. We noticed the beautiful crowns and fretted halos of his Madonnas, the armour of Fortitude, the gorgeous trimmings on the robes of the crowd in the Adoration of the Magi, and the originality of the jewelled pendant of one of the Graces (Primavera), which binds two plaits of her beautiful hair together.

Then we made a family portrait gallery of all the Medicis.

Cosimo kneels at Mary's feet in the Adoration of the Magi, and Giuliano and Lorenzo stand proudly at one side. We find these two again as children at the Virgin's knee

in the Madonna of the Magnificat. Giuliano's portrait is at Berlin, and we find two pictures of his beautiful beloved Simonetta. In one of these (Pitti Palace), she is depicted dressed in Puritan simplicity, and in the other with her beautiful hair picturesquely waved and studded with pearls (Florentine ladies seem to have had most beautiful hair, and arranged it most elaborately). She figures also adorned with olive branches as Pallas in "Pallas and the Centaur."

We noticed the pictures which show the spirit of the Renaissance most, and found that with the exception of Calumny they probably date from the same period. The three most beautiful are Primavera and Pallas, the birth of Venus, and the Centaur. I think in Primavera were realised most of all our failure to imagine the glorious colours which we should see in the original. There is a small coloured illustration of it in "Masterpieces of Colour," which is, however, of some use.

The Golden Age of Florence ended in 1492, with Lorenzo di Medici's death, and Botticelli seems to have been greatly influenced by Savonarola. After the Frabe's death, his "bottega" was the rendezvous of the friends of the lost cause, and men gathered round him and talked of the dead days when "Christ was King of Florence." Sandro consoled himself in his sorrow with illustrating Dante, and left posterity a folio volume of drawings.

His "Calumny of Apelles" (which the children liked best) fitted in with the work in "Ourselves" this term, and they appreciated it doubly when they knew why he painted it and gave it to his one true friend.

Of course we read the parts of "Mornings in Florence" which fitted in with the pictures, and we also studied short lives of S. Augustine and Savonarola.

The following books are very useful: "Vasari's Lives of the Painters" (1s. 6d. volume; Dent); "Masterpieces in Colour: Botticelli" (1s. 6d.); "The Education of an

Artist" (Lewis Hind; 7s. 6d.) with ninety-one splendid illustrations; "Botticelli" (Newnes' Art Library; 3s. 6d., or, with eight extra plates, 4s. 6d.); "Kunst-Geschichte" (Wickenhager; 5s.) (useful for comparison); "The Christ Face in Art" (J. Burns).

I found these books especially useful, as the Botticelli Perry Pictures do not show the details at all well: as, for instance, in Tobias and the Archangel. The little woolly dog is scarcely visible, nor is the dear white horse in the Adoration of the Magi. Newnes' 3s. 6d. "Botticelli" is invaluable in this way, as it gives enlargements of the groups in many of the pictures. The Botticelli background of a tower and a bridge over a winding stream shows up very clearly in these splendid reproductions.

THE VISION OF S. AUGUSTINE.

There is one legend told of S. Augustine which has comforted many hearts when puzzling questions have arisen and it has seemed so difficult to understand all the Bible teaches us about our Father in Heaven. They say that once this great father of the Church was walking along by the seashore, troubled and perplexed because he could not understand many things about God, he came upon a little child playing there alone. The child had dugged a hole in the sand and was carefully filling it with water which he brought from the sea in a spoon. The bishop stopped and watched him for a while, and then he asked: "What art thou doing, my child?" "I mean to empty the sea into my hole," answered the child, busily going backwards and forwards with his spoon. "But that is impossible," said the bishop. "Not more impossible than that thy human mind should understand the mind of God," said the child, gazing upwards at him with grave sweet eyes.

And before the bishop could answer, the child had vanished, and the saint knew that God had sent him as an

answer to his troubled thoughts and as a rebuke for his trying to understand the things that only God could know.

LIFE OF S. AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO.

His life is different from that of other saints because written by himself. He wrote "The Confessions of S. Augustine"; an account of all that he thought and did from the time he was a little child. Born in 354 in North of Africa. His mother, Monica, was a Christian, but all her prayers and loving care could not keep her son from his evil ways. He is often called Prodigal Saint, because for many years he lived in the midst of the sins and evil pleasures of the world, until he learned to say: "I will arise and go to my Father." In his book, S. Augustine first tells of himself as a tiny baby, not from what he remembered, but from what he saw in other babies. Then about when he went to school and how he hated it. Lessons so difficult, masters so strict, play much nicer than work, and when lessons were unlearned he was whipped. He could not see use of lessons and the whippings were so sore. In his book he tells how it made him say his first prayer to God: "I used to ask Thee, though a very little boy, yet with no little earnestness, that I might not be whipped at school." He hated staying indoors to learn dull wearisome lessons, but he loved games, and was also eager to be first in them, but after them came the whipping, and he could not understand how it could all be meant for his good.

In his book he makes confession of everything: how he was greedy and stole sweet things from the table when no one was looking, and how he cheated at games only to come out first. When a big boy he went further and further astray, took what did not belong to him out of pride and boastfulness, and liked to show off to other boys how little he cared about doing wrong, and for them to think he was afraid of nothing. It seemed as if he would break his

mother's heart, but through all his sin she loved and prayed for him, but he paid no heed. One day, God sent her a comforting dream: an angel came and asked her why she was sad. "I weep over the ruin of my son," she said. The angel then told her he should be saved. Monica told Augustine; he only laughed, but he did not forget it. Then Monica consulted a bishop about him, but he would not speak to him, but told her he was sure her son would change. Many years after, Augustine did change, but the burden of his evil life was great; his sins were like a heavy chain. Then he read the holy writings, and knew God was waiting to receive him. He went straight to his mother and told her how sorry for his sins he was, and so she died happy about him. So this great sinner became one of God's saints and did wonderful work for Him. Made Bishop of Hippo, he was one of the most famous bishops the world has ever known.

To some students mediæval art, Botticelli for example, presents difficulties. Perhaps these would disappear if they remembered that such artists conceived every incident allegorically and executed the details symbolically. Children will delight in picking out symbols and finding their meaning when trained to it. For example, the peacock in "The Adoration of the Magi," standing first for "the pomps and vanities of the world," and secondly as typifying the gifts brought to Solomon—"apes and peacocks." Or the cloak brought in "The Birth of Venus" because "absolute beauty" cannot be comprehended on earth. Drawing memory sketches at the end of a lesson with straight lines when children cannot yet attain to figures fixes the "composition" in their memory.

One child of 8½ discovered unaided the double significance of Simonetta—the "Summer" in "The Allegory of Spring" standing for Mary Queen of Heaven, to whom May was dedicated, and Venus Queen of Love and Beauty.